Illinois Early Learning Council
Data, Research, and Evaluation Committee
November 25, 2013
10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Ounce of Prevention Fund
33 W. Monroe, Suite 2400
Chicago, IL

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Participants
In-Person: Pam Bonsu, Bernard Cesarone, Anna Colaner, Angela Farwig, Karen Freel, Lisa Christensen Gee, Dan Harris, Theresa Hawley, Eboni Howard, Elliot Regenstein, Bob Spatz, Teri Talan, Dawn Thomas, Joellyn Whitehead
Phone: David Alexander, Serah Fatani, Tahney Fletcher, Ann Freiberg, Bob Goerge, Noriko Magari, Mario Perez, Jacob Vigil, Cindy Zumwalt

1. **Welcome and Introductions**
   The Data Quality Campaign report on state actions was released and is available on its website.

2. **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**
   The minutes from the August 8, 2013 meeting were formally approved with one revision: Teri Talan's name was added to the list of meeting participants.

3. **P-20 Council Update**
   The Data, Assessment, and Accountability Subcommittee of the P-20 Council had a meeting in early October. The new design for the ISBE state report card was discussed; the new design has since been released. There is a report on the Longitudinal Data System coming out in January. ISBE has changed vendors for some of this work so it is a little behind schedule. The agency is working on getting a no-cost extension with the federal government. Finally, there was an extended discussion about PARCC assessments, which surfaced issues relating to the need for technology upgrades at schools to administer these assessments.

4. **Strong Start for America's Children Act**
   The president's budget address called for a significant investment in early childhood. This proposal is now contained in draft legislation in both the House and Senate, although there are slight differences between the two bills. The bills create new requirements on data reporting, which are summarized in the "New Pre-K Bill Contains Revolutionary Data Requirements" article that was distributed to the committee. There is also a proposal from last year's budget for longitudinal data systems grants that would go to states to help them build out early learning data systems. These proposals indicate that there is a lot of momentum at the federal level regarding efforts to more effectively collect early childhood data, so we should continue to think about opportunities that this presents.

5. **JSI RFI update**
   The RFI for the Unified Early Childhood Data System was released last spring. JSI prepared this RFI, which was based on the technical architecture report it prepared per its original contract. JSI has

another contract to review the RFI responses and assist the governor's office with the RFP for the Unified Early Childhood Data System, which is anticipated to be released in the next 6-9 months. JSI's work is also informing the work on the Longitudinal Data System.

In addition, a lot of incremental work is going on behind the scenes to connect data at specific levels in preparation for the release of the larger RFP. Examples of this work include linking program data that is needed to rate programs in the ExceleRate system with INCCRRA data and linking ISBE teacher-level data with data contained in the Gateways to Opportunity registry.

6. **RTT-ELC Update**
   The QRIS evaluation study planning meeting is scheduled for November 26. This is a high-level meeting that will focus on what our priorities are as a state and solicit feedback on research questions that should be included in the study. Kelly Maxwell from Child Trends will attend to provide expertise in this area. Under the timeline set forth in the federal work plan for the evaluation study, there will be two years of planning and data collection, followed by six months for data analysis and reporting.

7. **Research Database – Cost Analysis/Website Mock-ups and Overview Document**
   An overview of the current status of the research database project was distributed to the committee. This overview outlines the three options for the database that were discussed at the last meeting: (1) a full database; (2) a scaled-down database that would have links to data sources and perhaps a small database of research; and (3) a referral-only website. Dawn Thomas and Bernard Cesarone prepared a mock-up of the scaled-down research database website (option 2 above) for the meeting. Dawn and Bernard also prepared a simple cost analysis of what it might cost to start up and maintain this kind of website. This "dummy website" can be accessed at http://workspace.crc.uiuc.edu/ELCresearch/. The committee discussed each section of the website, as indicated below.

   About Us
   This section of website would include some basic language about the Early Learning Council, the DRE Committee, etc.

   Databases of Education Research
   This page would provide an overview of a variety of education research databases and link to resources that are available, such as ERIC. The page could also contain some more specific information about each of the databases (for example, what journals are covered, the time period covered etc.) and instructions for searching them. Some of the databases that have full text may charge a fee for access, so we may want to note that where applicable.

   Given that good research resources such as the Research Connections database are already available, a key issue to be addressed is what this research database would add to existing resources or what gaps it would address. A good way to approach the website might be to first direct users to research aggregation services such as Research Connections that highlight some of the best resources. If users don't find what they are looking for through the research aggregator websites, they can then turn to the databases found on this website. The research aggregator links section would have its own page on the website.

Research in Process Database
This page would include a small database, created specifically for this project, with research in process. A key question regarding this part of the website is how these resources will be added. For instance, it could be a group effort by committee members or undertaken by the individual(s) tasked with starting up the website.

This section would also include a search function that would allow users to search for research and view the title of the research along with an abstract and/or full text where available. An important function that should be included here is a geographic search function. Finally, there is a link on this page to a staff administrative page, where the person staffing the database could input the data needed for research to be added to the website.

The committee noted that the "Research in Process" page is an important feature of the website because research that is currently in process is difficult to find. One often has to attend conferences to see the most up-to-date research, so capturing this systematically could add real value. Technical reports, not just research studies, should also be included on this page.

Data Analysis Products
This page could include the following features discussed below.
(1) *Research gap analysis*: The DRE Committee is responsible for this work according to our work plan; we would need to decide who would actually create the gap analysis at a later date. To some extent the gap analysis is shared work with the other ELC committees. If a committee is interested in a particular issue but finds that there is no research on it, then that committee can identify that gap for us and we can try and address it.
(2) *State comparisons*: This section could consist of links to other sources; there is probably no need to start from scratch. One new thing that could be included is state comparisons of demographic data from the Census – IECAM can do this work. Another use of the state comparisons could be to see where Illinois data is missing from various state compilations.
(3) *Research syntheses:* This could be a mix of products developed specifically for this website and links to products found elsewhere. We could use the ERIC digests as a pattern for this.
(4) *Overview and bibliography on common research questions*: This is a variation of the research syntheses; it may be longer or shorter depending on how we want to do it.
(5) *Evidence-based practice products*: This section is not contained in the overview document but we may want to include it if we expand our definition of practitioners to include classroom teachers. Examples of these types of products are tip sheets for teachers and parents.

Community
This page could host different features that have been suggested by committee members – for example, a listserv for DRE Committee members or a blog. Research requests from the ELC committees and research recommendations from the DRE Committee could be included in this section as well.

Several draft budget scenarios for the research database project were also presented and discussed. The budget depends on what we want the website to do along with the salaries of those who are maintaining it. A simple start-up budget without full text that includes some personnel and fringe benefits along with equipment is approximately $16,000. Based on preliminary inquiries, including full text subscriptions would likely add at least $12,000 to this budget, but this budget item really

depends on what we want in terms of the availability of full text. A sample annual maintenance budget was also presented. Without full text, this sample budget comes in around $19,000. With full text, this budget increases quite dramatically to upwards of $30,000. For all of the budgets, much depends on personnel and salary.

The committee also discussed some important overarching concerns regarding the research database project. It is important to keep in mind the original purpose of this project, which is to provide a resource for the Illinois early learning community to enable it to more easily access the broad range of research that is available. It is not the charge of the committee to provide full-text research studies; we are simply trying to make a difficult job easier. But we should think about the next step for users who would like to access full text.

Another key consideration is determining who the primary audience for the website is – who would use it that does not already know how to access research? This may be a small universe consisting of a mix of policy-makers, researchers, advocates, legislative staff and members of ELC committees. Even if it is a smaller group, the Committee discussed the importance of serving our community and empowering it to find the research it needs. Committee members discussed the fact that the database of ongoing research would likely add the most value.

The research database is included in the DRE Committee work plan and was identified as an Early Learning Council priority. The Committee will fulfill its obligation to shape a proposal for what this research database might look like, so the next step is to bring this work to the ELC Executive Committee and ensure that the proposed website will have utility to members and is worth moving forward on.

8. **REL Midwest Proposal**

   Eboni Howard and Pam Bonsu from REL Midwest discussed the concept paper that they submitted to the federal Institute of Education Sciences (IES). The concept paper proposed to examine efforts to implement early childhood data systems in other states and was developed following the last DRE Committee meeting and subsequent discussion with the DRE Committee co-chairs. REL has received approval of the concept paper and they can now move forward with submitting a full proposal on the topic of early childhood data systems.

   There are two primary research questions in the concept paper:
   1. Are states that are recognized as having existing or well-conceptualized early childhood data systems linking or integrating early childhood data across systems (e.g., K-12 systems, health and human services)?
   2. What lessons can states with unified early childhood data systems share with other states developing their early childhood data systems?

   The final product will include a technical report and a one day workshop or roundtable to discuss findings. The full proposal is due in December. Assuming it is approved, work would begin in March 2014 and conclude in December 2014. The first part of the project is a literature review/state scan of states with federal grants (e.g., Race to the Top and longitudinal data systems grants) to create an education data system that will connect with other systems. The following 15 states have already been identified: Connecticut, Colorado, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Oklahoma, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Texas and Wisconsin. The committee suggested adding Delaware, Maryland, and New York to the list.

REL will review the grant proposals submitted by each of these states and then reach out to each state for interviews. The Early Childhood Data Collaborative conducted a survey of states data systems in 2011 and published a list of representatives from each state; a new report is coming out in a few months, so an updated list of these representatives should be available.

This research will serve two purposes for our state. First, this project is much more process-oriented than the report from the Early Childhood Data Collaborative. Second, the federal government is continuing to provide resources on data systems so this type of report will help Illinois advocate in this arena and be competitive for additional funds.

The committee noted that it had developed a "Key Policy Questions" document that should inform REL's work. Committee members also raised specific questions that they would like addressed in this project, including the governance (at the state and local levels if applicable), financing, and technical structures that other states are using in their data systems, and whether states are including home visiting data in their systems. Committee members were encouraged to submit specific feedback to REL by mid-December to inform the full proposal that is due in January.

9. **Home Visiting Task Force Inventory**
   Anna Potere, the staffer for the Home Visiting Task Force, discussed a project the Task Force is working on that seeks to create a comprehensive inventory of the data elements that state agencies are collecting regarding home visiting programs. Home visiting is funded through several different entities in Illinois, each with its own data collection system. The full inventory currently includes 200 separate data elements. While there is some overlap in these data elements, many of them have different definitions and/or are collected at different times.

   The HVTF is planning to finalize the spreadsheet in January and looking for ways to utilize it. One important focus in home visiting right now is showing outcomes. With this in mind, the HVTF would like to partner with the DRE Committee to think about what metrics to prioritize to ensure that key home visiting outcome data across all agencies and data systems are being collected. Another important issue to be considered is what home visiting data elements should be included in the Unified Early Childhood Data System. It was suggested that perhaps the best way to approach this project is for a work group to come together to determine what it is we want to know about home visiting programs (what are the key research and policy questions) and then analyze what is/what is not being collected in each system to identify gaps.

<div align="center">ACTION ITEMS FROM 11/25/13 MEETING</div>

- **DRE Staffer will draft a proposal regarding the Research Database for the DRE Committee to review at our next meeting. If approved, this proposal will be shared with the ELC Executive Committee.**
- **Angela Farwig will send the DRE Key Policy Questions document to REL Midwest.**
- **DRE Committee members should send their feedback on what should be included in the full REL Midwest research proposal to DRE staffer and/or co-chairs by mid-December.**
- **DRE Staffer will work with Anna Potere, the staffer for the Home Visiting Task Force, to send out an invitation to members of the DRE Committee and the HVTF to join an ad hoc group to work on developing recommendations for home visiting metrics that should be collected by the state and included in the Unified Early Childhood Data System.**